

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 388

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY STUDENT MOOD COMPARED WITH GPCR

1. SCANDINAVIAN EMBOFF, A FORMER PEKING UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO SERVED IN HIS EMBASSY HERE DURING CULTURAL REVOLUTION, HAS CONTRASTED CURRENT PEKING MOOD, PARTICULARLY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, WITH THAT DURING CULTURAL REVOLUTION WHEN MEDIA ATTACKS WERE AT ABOUT SAME LEVEL THEY ARE IN CURRENT CAMPAIGN. HE CHARACTERIZED MOOD NOW AS BEING VERY MUCH CALMER THAN MOOD IN 1966, WITH MEDIA AND POSTER MANIFESTATIONS NOW OCCURRING IN RELATIVE ISOLATION AND THE POPULACE, INCLUDING STUDENTS, GOING ABOUT BUSINESS VERY MUCH AS USUAL.

2. EMBOFF MARCH 1 PAID LATEST OF HIS REGULAR VISITS TO PEKING UNIVERSITY CAMPUS TO CHAT WITH CHINESE FRIENDS ON FACULTY THERE THAT HE HAS MAINTAINED FOR PAST DECADE. FROM THEIR DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS, HE CONCLUDES THAT ATTITUDES OF FACULTY AND STUDENTS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY "PASSIVITY" AND THAT CAMPUS IS ABOUT AS RELAXED AS IN NORMAL TIMES. WHEN MEDIA CAMPAIGNS IN CULTURAL REVOLUTION HAD REACHED STAGE OF STRONG--EVEN NASTY--PERSONAL ATTACKS SUCH AS THOSE IN MEDIA TODAY, RED GUARDS WERE ALREADY OUT

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ON THE STREETS AND PASSIONATE, FRENATIC ACTIVITY

PERVADED THE CITY AS WELL AS UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES.

3. DURING LAST WEEK'S VISIT, FACULTY FRIEND TOLD OUR SCANDINAVIAN SOURCE OF BEING CONDUCTED A FEW DAYS EARLIER BY TWO STUDENTS, ONE "RED" AND ONE "EXPERTY," TO SEE POSTER DISPLAYS. FACULTY MEMBER ASKED STUDENTS TO SHOW HIM WHAT POSTERS THEY THEMSELVES HAD WRITTEN. THEY SAID NONE OF THEIR POSTERS WERE DISPLAYED. FACULTY MEMBER THEN ASKED TO SEE POSTERS THEY WERE PREPARING AND STUDENTS REPLIED THAT NONE WERE IN PREPARATION. THEY EXPLAINED, "WE DON'T KNOW YET WHAT TO WRITE... BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED ANY DIRECTIVE TO TELL US WHAT TO DO." CONCLUSION SCANDINAVIAN EMBOFF DRAWS IS THAT WHILE JOINT PEKING-TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY CAMPAIGN STEERING ABMMITTEE IS OBVIOUSLY AT WORK AND INVOLVING SOME STUDENTS, EFFORT ON CAMPUSES CLEARLY DOES NOT--AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE--RISK IGNITING UNCONTROLLABLE FIRE.

4. A GROUP OF FOREIGN STUDENTS AT PEKING UNIVERSITY TOLD ANOTHER EMBASSY LAST WEEK THAT THE CHINESE STUDENTS ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN AND THAT EVEN THE ACTIVE POSTER WRITERS STILL SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME AT THEIR REGULAR ACADEMIC STUDIES. THAYER

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